70. In the Sholápur division there were 16 forest fires in all against 14 in the year before, and although there were two fires more than the previous year, still the area burnt was less; of these 16 fires no less than 6 occurred along the Railway lines caused by sparks or burning substances thrown from trains, and 2 by sudden wind springing up while fire tracing was being done. In one case an offender was caught, prosecuted and convicted; and in seven the origin could not be traced. No expenditure was incurred under *A. VIII. f* in this division.

71. The Collector of Khándesh in forwarding the Administration Report of the East Khándesh Division remarks :—

"The figures given for forest fires would show that less than ten per cent. of the protected area was burnt—an estimate which, considering how much one hears of fires, would appear to be too favourable :"

and in forwarding that of the West Khándesh Division he writes :—

"As regards protection of forests from fire it does not seem that things are improving. The whole subject is a very difficult and disheartening one. In the case of some jungle that is burnt from end to end regularly every year the experiment might be tried of setting fire to it in half a dozen places early in the season when the greater part of the grass is still too damp to burn and letting the fire spread as it chooses. If a sufficiently early date were chosen the fire might then run only along the ridges where the grass was short and dry : the longer coarser grass in the intervening valleys might not catch fire : if this were so, then the different valleys would thenceforth be separated from each other by these natural fire traces, so that if later in the season one or more valleys did catch fire the chances of the fire spreading to the others would be reduced. I propose this only for some forest that consists of a series of valleys : and a forest that is morally certain to be burnt in the course of the year whether we set fire to it or not. If a forest is destined to take fire in any case it seems better that it should take fire at that season when the fire can do least harm."

72. The Collector of Ahmednagar in forwarding the report remarks :—

"Notwithstanding the increase in area burnt it bears a very insignificant proportion to the total forest area protected and the results cannot be called very unsatisfactory if any reliance can be placed on the estimate."

73. The Collector of Poona in forwarding the Divisional Forest Officer's report remarks :—

"The increase in fires is to be deplored, but most of them apparently were accidental. Formerly they were in very many cases intentional, and there is every reason to hope that gradually the cultivators will learn to be more careful in their ráb-burning."

(3).—Regulation of Grazing and Protection from Cattle.

74. Grazing arrangements were the same as last year, *viz.*, regulated under the rules published by Government in their Resolution No. 3595, dated 23rd May 1890, in the Revenue Department; and the following statement shows the areas closed and open to grazing during the year in the several divisions of the Central Circle :—

No.	Division.	Closed.	Open.	Total.
		Sq. m.	Sq. m.	Sq. m.
1	East Khándesh	60	747	807
2	West Khándesh	363	1,359	1,722
3	Násik	553	727	1,280
4	Ahmednagar	294	553	847
5	Poona	367	344	711
6	Sátára	143	529	672
7	Sholápur	171	107	278
	Total ...	1,951	4,366	6,317

75. The number of cattle impounded for trespassing in closed forest reservations and for grazing in open forests without passes was 337,918 against 294,769 in the year preceding, and the following statement shows the different

kinds of such cattle and how many were taken from the open and from the closed forests respectively :—

No.	Division.	Kind of Forest area.	Cows and Bullocks.	Buffaloes.	Camels.	Horses.	Asses.	Sheep.	Goats.	Total from	
										Closed area.	Open area.
1	East Khándesh	Closed ...	5,083	1,178	...	26	...	8	940	7,235	...
		Open ...	1,425	231	...	27	...	231	2,625	...	4,539
2	West Khándesh... ...	Closed ...	15,237	1,980	...	167	...	2,572	2,922	22,898	...
		Open ...	1,985	403	...	51	...	1,517	1,857	...	5,813
3	Násik	Closed ...	14,065	1,000	...	69	51	7,885	6,183	30,123	...
		Open ...	5,037	565	...	100	16	7,251	9,136	...	23,005
4	Ahmednagar	Closed ...	29,764	6,057	16	451	148	13,802	13,932	64,170	...
		Open ...	10,420	985	...	78	17	11,721	10,246	...	33,467
5	Poona	Closed ...	15,473	1,137	2	213	110	16,371	7,887	41,193	...
		Open ...	5,271	314	1	112	12	8,261	6,647	...	20,618
6	Sátára	Closed ...	11,998	1,255	...	59	41	13,547	3,570	30,470	...
		Open ...	5,967	1,168	...	30	46	11,471	3,736	...	22,418
7	Sholápur...	Closed ...	10,807	1,338	13	112	95	4,634	3,428	26,427	...
		Open ...	3,610	307	...	21	...	811	793	...	5,542
	Total ...	Closed ...	109,327	13,945	31	1,107	445	58,819	38,842	222,516	...
		Open ...	34,615	3,973	1	419	91	41,263	35,040	...	115,402
	Grand Total closed and open	..	143,942	17,918	32	1,526	536	100,082	73,882	337,918	

76. It will be seen that out of the total number impounded 100,082 were sheep and 73,882 goats, or more than one-half were sheep and goats, while all other different kinds of cattle were 163,954 in number.

77. In the East Khándesh division there has been some reduction in the total number of animals impounded, and this is the more noticeable in the case of closed forests ; while in the West Khándesh division on the other hand there has been an increase in impoundings from closed forests ; and the Divisional Forest Officer states in support of this increase that while inspecting certain forests in the cold weather he found that illicit grazing had been prevalent in closed forests, and the attention of the Range Forest Officers was particularly drawn to this matter. However the total impoundings cannot be considered excessive in view of the large forest area of this division.

The Collector of Khándesh in forwarding the report remarks :—

"Impoundings increased considerably. It would appear that the people, tempted by the numerical weakness, or perhaps the temporary slackness of the Forest establishment, had driven their cattle into the closed forests in larger numbers, hoping to escape the penalty. The cure for this would appear to be the one the Forest Department adopted, *viz.*, more rigorous impoundings, which will show the people that the chances of their suffering for their infringement of the law are greater than they supposed and will thus reduce the temptation to infringe.

78. There is an increase in the number of cattle impounded in the Násik division. Sheep and goats have been allowed to graze in certain villages in every táluka, and the Divisional Forest Officer reports that goats especially should be prohibited everywhere, as they are preventing the reboisement of the barren areas they frequent, and they spoil the pasture for horned cattle. The Collector, in forwarding the Divisional Administration Report, remarks with reference to this subject :—

"In this district, save in Nándgaon, there is no system. All seem agreed that the present closures are unsatisfactory. Excluding Peint, in this district, only one-half the area is open to grazing instead of at least three-quarters, that means that one-half the present closed area should be open. The Conservator has made proposals, which, I hope, will mend matters. I am not prepared to concur with the view that "goats should be prohibited *everywhere*." In the East goats, able to pick up a living easily, have ever been valuable to the poor. They furnish the children's milk and the only meat available. I can endorse Mr. Hight's pregnant observation in speaking of the reboisement that is apparent when he concludes that this modern growth is 'owing *not* to closures, for I see no difference between closed lands and open ones, but to the stoppage of cuttings.' It is the light axe and the curved knife that do the chief damage, and the cultivators' cattle require exclusion only from defined areas such as recent coupes, kurans and so forth."

In respect of the Collector's remark that there is no system of closed and open forest, save in Nandgaon, it must be explained that the proportion of forest to be closed and to be open to grazing in the forest of every village in the Násik district, was determined by Mr. Frost, I. C. S., when Forest Settlement Officer of Násik, who fixed not only the particular portion of each forest to be open and to be closed respectively, but also prescribed the period for which the closure should run.

These proposals were approved by the then Collector of Násik, by the Commissioner of the Division, and by Government, who sanctioned their adoption. In the Nándgaon Táluka working-plans have been applied since by the Forest Department to the forest areas, and the original scheme of open and close forest has been revised by the Forest officers, so that closure against cattle is applied with regard to requirements of forestry, and in consequence a larger area has been opened to grazing than was done under the Forest Settlement Officer's method of closing half and opening half the forest area of each village, as working-plans are extended to other ranges so will the grazing arrangements be revised concurrently.

79. There has been a slight increase in the total number of impoundings in the Ahmednagar division which calls for no special explanation; but out of the total number of impounded animals 25,523 were sheep and 24,178 were goats, or more than half were sheep and goats.

80. In the Poona division the grazing rules were the same as last year. There was an increase of 10,110 in the number of cattle impounded, and the Divisional Forest Officer states that the Forest subordinates have been more active than usual in protecting the forests against trespassing cattle in the closed and open areas. The Collector of Poona remarks:—

"The increase in the number of the impounded cattle is due to increased vigilance on the part of the Forest guards, and the increase in the receipts is due partly to the increase in the number of the impounded cattle and partly to the raising of the pound fees on goats.

"It may be noted, however, that the provisions of the Act have been largely resorted to by private persons, which shows that it is really wanted, and the large impoundings by the Forest Department are only the natural results of the carelessness of the people."

81. The total impoundings in the Sátára division show a very slight decrease viz., of 83, when compared with those of the year before. The Divisional Forest Officer reports that the village officers were apathetic in the collection of grazing fees during 1892-93 and 1893-94, and consequently Government were losing a part of their legitimate revenue. The Collector thereon ordered that the Forest officers should collect fees for cattle found in forests where village officers had failed to do so, and the result of this order was that Rs. 11,051 were collected during 1894-95 against Rs. 5,694 in the year before. But this order has been cancelled by the Commissioner, Central Division, who suggests

"that the performance of their duties regarding the issue of permits should be exacted with greater stringency from village officers. If permits are to be issued by Forest officers without impounding the animals, no one will take out permits in the hope of getting off payment altogether. Village officers must be taught to see that necessary permits are issued in due time before the grazing season opens or that they will suffer in pocket instead of gaining."

The Collector of Sátára has remarked in his administration Report

"that the cancellation of the order above referred to will probably lead to a further diminution of revenue,"

and in forwarding the Divisional Forest Administration Report he writes:—

"I do not altogether agree with him (Mr. Fagan) about the much canvassed question of the grazing rules, and I have felt myself obliged recently to cancel an order of my predecessor's, which Mr. Fagan much approved of, but his discussion of a proposed change is always temperate and reasonable, and if the change is resolved on though he may not like it, he carries it out loyally."

82. There has been an increase in the number of cattle impounded in the Sholápur division also, the assigned reason being that Forest subordinates were more vigilant and active than before.

83. The following statement shows the number of cattle impounded by people themselves for trespassing on their private lands during the revenue year

and those impounded by the Forest Department during the Forest year 1894-95, the Revenue year coinciding with the Forest year :—

No.	Division.	Number of Cattle impounded by people.	Number of Cattle impounded by Forest Department.
1	East Khándesh	235,442	40,485
2	West Khándesh		
3	Násik	87,105	53,128
4	Ahmednagar	61,127	97,637
5	Poona	57,252	61,811
6	Sátára	38,762	52,888
7	Sholápur	27,950	31,969
	Total ...	507,638	337,918

84. Fences, consisting of crown branches of the felled trees, have been erected round Forest reserves under reboisement, such as exploited coupes, plantations, &c., for keeping out cattle ; and wire fencing has also been put up round some selected reserves, the material required having been purchased in the local market. The following are the details of the wire fence erected:—

No.	Division.	Quantity of Wire, Staples, &c., purchased.		Expenditure incurred.	Length of Fence erected.	Remarks.
		Wire.	Staples.			
		Cwt.	Cwt. qr. lbs.	Rs. a. p.	M. ft.	
1	East Khándesh ...	487	1 2 0	2,965	3 2,640	
2	West Khándesh ...	90	2 0 26	1,888	4 2,640	
3	Násik	...	...	52	1 4,560	The wire in stock was used.
4	Ahmednagar ...	...	...	668	2 3,960	Do. do.
5	Poona	40	2 0 0	2,128	8 165	
6	Sátára	60	0 2 2	733	0 4,663	
7	Sholápur	28	No. 27,000	1,300	7 2,221	
	Total ...	705	6 1 0 No. 27,000	9,734	28 5,009	

(*c*).—Improvement of Forest Growth.

(*1*).—*Natural Reproduction.*

85. Given a seasonable rainfall, the measures required to be taken to ensure or improve the natural reproduction in the forests may be described as—

(*a*) the prevention of forest fires,

(*b*) the exclusion of harmful grazing,

(*c*) protection against illicit and irregular cuttings,

(*d*) improvement fellings and removals.

Seeing that considerable attention has been given in years past, and is being given at present, to these important factors of efficient forest conservancy, natural production has been satisfactory on the whole, and is as good as can be expected where the above conditions are observed.